**Mercury and Your Health!**

Mercury is one of a number of persistent bioaccumulative toxic chemicals (PBT's) and can cause serious ecological and health problems when released to the environment.

- Children are most sensitive to mercury poisoning during early development to age six.
- Mercury is toxic to the nervous system. Short term (high mercury concentration) exposure can result in nausea, shortness of breath, and bronchitis.
- Exposure to high levels of mercury over extended time can result in shakiness, tremors, numbness the fingers and toes, loss of muscle control, memory loss and kidney disease.

**Mercury Spill Information!**

Even the smallest amount of mercury needs to be treated as a serious issue. Care must be taken not to touch the mercury.

**For More Information about Mercury and Its Health and Environmental Effects, Go to or call:**

www.deq.utah.gov/mercury

www.epa.gov/mercury

www.slvhealth.org

Bear River Health Department – 24-Hr Call Center – 1-877-229-8825

Central Utah Public Health Department – 435-896-5451 or 5452

Davis County Health Department – 801-451-3296

Salt Lake Valley Health Department – 24-Hr Emergency Response – 801-313-6745

Southeastern Utah District Health Department – 435-637-3671

Southwest Utah Public Health Department – 435-986-2580

Summit County Public Health Department – 435-615-3918 (Park City), 435-336-3227 (Coalville)

Tooele County Health Department – 435-843-2300

Tri-County Health Department – 435-781-5475

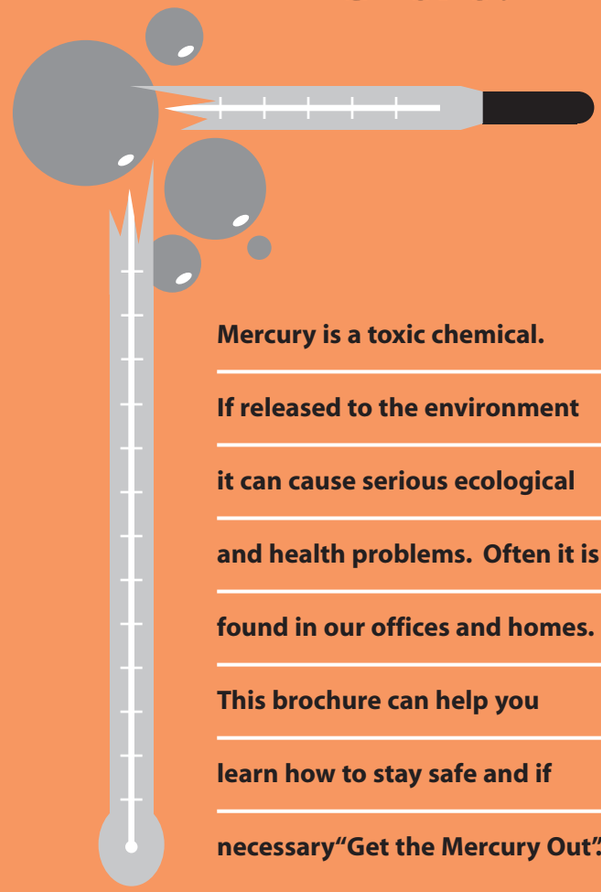
Utah County Health Department – 801-851-7525

Wasatch County Health Department – 24 Hr Contact – 435-657-3264

Weber-Morgan Health Department – 801-399-7160

**Department of Environmental Quality**
**Hotline – 1-800-458-0145**
**Emergency Response – 1-801-576-4123**

# Get the Mercury Out!



**Mercury is a toxic chemical.**

**If released to the environment**

**it can cause serious ecological**

**and health problems. Often it is**

**found in our offices and homes.**

**This brochure can help you**

**learn how to stay safe and if**

**necessary "Get the Mercury Out".**

**Get the Mercury Out!**

Potentially toxic mercury is found in a wide variety of household products like thermometers. Knowing what products contain mercury, handling them properly, and knowing what to do in case of a spill will help limit the risk of mercury exposure to family members and pets.

Products that contain Mercury that can be found in your Home:

- Thermometers
- Thermostats
- Fluorescent and Mercury Vapor Lamps
- Mercury Switches
  (switches with a "smooth" movement, rather than a "click")
- Old Chemistry Sets and Toys
- Blood Pressure Gauges

## What NEVER to do with a mercury spill

- NEVER use a vacuum cleaner to clean up mercury. The vacuum will put mercury into the air and increase exposure. The vacuum appliance will be contaminated and have to be thrown away.
- NEVER use a broom to clean up mercury. It will break the mercury into smaller droplets and spread them.
- NEVER pour mercury down a drain. It may lodge in the plumbing and cause future problems during plumbing repairs. If discharged, it can cause pollution of the septic tank or sewage treatment plant.
- NEVER wash mercury-contaminated items in a washing machine. Mercury may contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.
- NEVER walk around if your shoes might be contaminated with mercury. Contaminated clothing can also spread mercury around.

### Federal Notification

Any time one pound or more of mercury is released to the environment (outside air, water, soil, or sewer system), the spiller must call the **National Response Center** (**NRC**).

**The NRC hotline** operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **(800) 424-8802**.

Note that because mercury is heavy, only two tablespoons of mercury weigh about one pound.

## SMALL SPILLS – A Dime-Sized Puddle

- Remove everyone from the area where cleanup will take place. Shut door of impacted area. Turn off ventilation system. DO NOT allow or gain assistance from children. Remember to remove all pets as well and remove all jewelry and watches from your hands as mercury will bond with the metal.
- Mercury can be cleaned up easily from the following surfaces: wood, linoleum, tile and any other like surface.
- If a spill occurs on carpet, curtains, upholstery or other like surface, these contaminated items should be thrown away in accordance with the disposal means outlined below. Only cut and remove the affected portion of the contaminated carpet for disposal.

### Check List Items Needed to Clean Up a Small Mercury Spill

- 4 to 5 Ziplock-type Bags
- Trash Bags (2 to 6 mm thick)
- Rubber or Latex Gloves
- Paper Towels
- Cardboard or Squeegee
- Eyedropper
- Duct Tape, or Shaving Cream and Small Paint Brush
- Flashlight
- Powdered Sulfur (optional)

### Cleanup Instructions

- Put on rubber or latex gloves.
- If there are any broken pieces of glass or sharp objects, place them on a paper towel. Fold the paper towel and place in a zip lock bag. Secure the bag and label it.
- Use a squeegee or cardboard to gather mercury beads, making slow sweeping motions to keep mercury from becoming uncontrollable. A flashlight can help locate additional glistening beads of mercury that may be sticking to the surface or in small cracked areas of the surface. Note: Mercury can move surprising distances on hard-flat surfaces, so be sure to inspect the entire room when "searching."
- Use the eyedropper to collect or draw up the mercury beads. Slowly and carefully squeeze mercury onto a damp paper towel. Place the paper towel in a zip lock bag and label it.
- After you remove larger beads, put shaving cream on a small paint brush or duct tape and gently "dot" the affected area to pick up smaller hard-to-see beads. Place the paint brush or duct tape in a zip lock bag and secure. Make sure to label the bag as directed by your local health department or Utah DEQ.
- It is OPTIONAL to use commercially available powdered sulfur to absorb the beads that are too small to see. The sulfur does two things: (**1**) it makes the mercury easier to see since there may be a color change from yellow to brown and (**2**) it binds the mercury so that it can be easily removed and suppresses the vapor of any missing mercury. Where to get commercialized sulfur? It could be included in mercury spill kits, which can be purchased from laboratory, chemical supply and hazardous materials response supply manufacturers. Note: When using powdered sulfur, do not breathe in the powder as it can be moderately toxic. Powdered sulfur may also stain fabrics a dark color. Additionally, users should read and understand all product information before use. You may want to request the services of a contractor who has monitoring equipment to screen for mercury vapors. Consult your local health department or Utah DEQ to inquire about contractors in your area.
- Place all materials used with the cleanup, including gloves, in a trash bag. Place all mercury beads and objects into the trash bag. Secure trash bag and label it as directed by your local health department or Utah DEQ.
- Contact your local health department for proper disposal in accordance with local, state and federal laws.
- Remember to keep the area well-ventilated to the outside (i.e., windows open and fans running) for at least 24 hours after your successful cleanup. Continue to keep pets and children out of cleanup area. If sickness occurs, seek medical attention immediately. Recommendation: If there are young children or pregnant women in the house, seek additional advice from your local or state health department.

## LARGE SPILLS –
**More than a dime-sized puddle of Mercury**

Caution: The general public can clean up from flat surfaces small mercury spills no greater than the amount contained in a thermometer . If you estimate your mercury spill to be greater than the amount in a thermometer, isolate the contaminated area and call your local health department or Utah DEQ.

### Cleanup Instructions:

- Isolate the Area
- Turn Down the Temperature
- Open Windows
- Don't Let Anyone Walk Through the Mercury
- Don't Vacuum
- Contact your Local Health Department or Utah Department of Environmental Quality